

still, to me it is a profound mystery why anybody should want to hear "Buttons and Bows" or "Water Boy" more than 20 times in the same week. The whole matter is properly one for the serious student of New Zealand culture, I suppose; but I can think of four possible explanations, apart from the unpredictable "sentimental association": (1) People want to hear their names on the air, and they pick the first tune that comes into their heads to accompany it; (2) The folk who listen to request sessions listen to nothing else; (3) The "plugging" of banal tunes is a disease some people have contracted from the radio; (4) The average popular piece is so like a gassy, coloured soft drink that it brings out the child in listeners, so that, like youngsters at a school picnic, they feel impelled to stuff themselves with it to the point of satiation.

—J.C.R.

Magic Casements

IT was a wholly fascinating hour I spent with the BBC mobile microphone in the *Window on France* programme from 3YA on Sunday, October 9. All our native technicians are at school to the BBC for programmes of this kind and this one was a model. It was artful in its contrasts, deft in cutting and composition, and subdued the ragged skeins of human interests to a coherent pattern. The hour swiftly flashed by. Heaven knows what it costs in time and money to make such a programme. The recording car travelled 2000 miles from Rouen to Marseille, and the difficulty of rounding up comprehensible speakers must have been formidable. From the outset they shrewdly gained our sympathy on this point by letting us hear some of the incomprehensible ones. The narrator kept himself well in the background, emerging from impersonality occasionally to keep in touch with his audience, and the authenticity of the voices, and the clash of viewpoint and attitude carried the programme through. Nor did the programme date, though it was made 18 months ago. Even French politics, despite their reputation for rapid change, chose to remain fairly stable over this period. The New Look is not yet old and the Black Market is still with them.

Stars and Starlets

NO one can say that the NZBS has not done much to assist local musical talent. They have, for example, multiplied stations up and down the country until they number, by my count, 26, and all with programmes clamouring to be filled. The gramophone record and the overseas programme do most to satisfy this greedy appetite, but the local artist plays a not inconsiderable part, particularly in the evening programmes. To my mind, though, our local artists could be better used. We are too wedded to a recital technique, taken over, no doubt, from the Concert Hall. A recital is all very well when we have a visit from a Solomon or an Aleksandr Helmann, but it is a different matter when J. Smith, of Puketitiri, takes the air to give us his latest version of the Drum Polonaise. The most conscientious of our local artists know their own limitations, and instead of being thrust forward

as stars or starlets, they would surely welcome a policy which would more often subordinate their contributions to the programme as a whole. In a programme of 18th Century music, for example, there are at least some local artists who could relieve the strain on Isobel Baillie for songs by Handel or Boyce and, what is more important, sing us songs that are not recorded. In music, as in films, the "star" system is a mixed blessing.

Sunday Citizens

SUNDAY afternoon programmes are among the most rewarding to listen to; at the same time, since there is no subsidiary station on the air, they offer some of the most hair-raising juxtapositions. It is impossible for it to be otherwise, where such different levels of taste must be catered for. As it was, on Sunday, October 9, we were strictly Third Programme at 4YA for an hour and a-half with Julian Huxley and Fauré, and then descended rather abruptly from these Olympian heights to musical comedy, for which no doubt many listeners were waiting. At this end of the islands anyway, where reasons of climate bar the progress of the Continental Sunday, there is usually a pretty large audience sitting huddled round their heaters with the radio on, and not all of them want to feel vaguely that they are putting the Almighty in their debt by listening to solemn music they do not like and talks they do not understand. When, if ever, it becomes possible to extend broadcasting time in the centres, the provision of alternative programmes for Sunday afternoon should have a high priority.

—K.J.S.

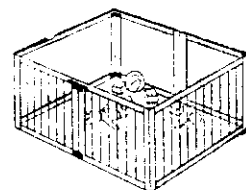
... Send Reinforcements

THE classic example of the difficulty men have communicating with each other is the story of the urgent message from the fighting front, which, having been handed on many times, reached the Officer Commanding as: "Enemy dancing on wet planks. Send reinforcements." New Zealand football commentators do a better job than any others I've heard, but their very speed and accuracy build an illusion about the game. "The forwards pack round." "Jones makes 10 yards and then runs into a tackle." "Robinson goes down on the ball." Sound, stock descriptive phrases, but like a blackboard diagram they don't communicate urgent action. Football is not a smooth, impersonal game. It is full of violent personal encounters and unexpected hazards. There is a quality of desperation in the players' movements that cannot possibly be communicated to radio listeners. The commentator must of necessity make his own game of this complicated, chancy confusion. He does, and he makes a most exciting business of it, but commentator's football isn't spectator's football, any more than spectator's football is player's football. Send reinforcements? What reinforcements? Television, I suppose.

—G. leF. Y.



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- THE ROSE AND THE STAR, Iris Morley and P. W. Manchester, 18/6 posted. Ballet in England and Russia compared and discussed by two acknowledged authorities, illustrated with many superb photographs of ballet in both countries.
- THE GOD-SEEKER, Sinclair Lewis, 13/- posted. In this new novel of a frontier missionary, though different in mood from his earlier, biting satires, the author adds another notable figure to his gallery of American types.
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